

will be given, sooner or later, when the heated passions of men have subsided, and when reason has resumed its sway.

Much has been said on the subject of loyalty in the course of the present and past discussions. Loyalty to-day is not what it was a few years ago. To be loyal a few years ago did not require as much subservency—I know not by what other word to characterise it—to the federal administration as is exacted to-day. Such a thing as conditional loyalty was tolerated three years ago. There were conditional Union men three years ago. Now everything must be unconditional—it must be unconditional loyalty; we must be unconditional Union men or we are disloyal to the government. Loyalty cannot and does not mean anything more than to support the government as organized by the constitution, and not the government as administered in defiance of the organic law which created it.

It does not mean that you need to support the powers assumed or acts committed in violation of the powers conferred by the organic law of the land. I cannot subscribe to the doctrine that it means an unconditional, unquestioning support of the federal administration. It has been said, not upon this floor, in so many words, that I recollect, that loyalty at the present day means “an unquestioning support of the federal administration,” which is a blind obedience to its despotic will, a willing subservency to arbitrary rule, a kind of humble, truculent pandering to its majesty, with thanks for being permitted to do your master's bidding.

I will profess none of it. It stinks in my nostrils as the foul emanation of a tyrant's breath. It is false, it is cruel, it is wicked; it is bold treason and arrant perjury against the great work of our fathers, consecrated by their blood and hallowed by their virtues. It is a violation of every right transmitted to us as a heritage, and that the plainest principles of justice and the weightiest obligations of duty require us to transmit them untarnished to the posterity we may leave behind us. I cannot subscribe to such a definition of loyalty. My obligations require me to support the constitution and the government organized by the constitution of the United States. I have never repudiated that obligation, nor do I expect to repudiate it so long as there is a constitution of the United States, or of the adhering States, and Maryland is one of the adhering States.

I think I have already occupied the time allotted to me, and am unwilling to violate any of the rules prescribed for the government of the body. I will therefore close, although I should be glad to have an opportunity to go on further—

THE PRESIDENT. The gentleman has five minutes longer.

MR. DENT. Then I will avail myself of its

use. The gentleman who last addressed the convention (Mr. Daniel) spoke of the law-making power, the law-executing power and the law-judging power, and thought it was the duty of the citizens of the State to obey that power—that that power was the government. Yet we are taught by the statesmen who preceded us to believe that that power is not vested in one man. I admit the force and truth of the remark if he will apply it to the several powers as they have been divided in the government; but I do not admit its truth when he applies it to him who has assumed to make, to judge of, and to execute the law for himself, as has been the case in many instances, thereby assuming to be the government of the United States. The position is too absurd to require refutation.

Reference has also been made to ballots and bullets, as if there was apprehension that the latter might be resorted to, or should be resorted to for the purpose of saving the government. We are willing to resort to ballots. We wish to exercise that privilege as freemen. We are in favor of the freedom of ballot, which has heretofore been accorded to the citizen of the State. We claim it as a right, and will exercise it as freemen;—I trust that we will. I am so disposed myself, despite any and all opposition which a manly effort can overcome. Many steps have been taken for the purpose of curtailing the exercise of that right. A continued effort in that direction might provoke us to bullets. Do not think I mean any intimidation. I do not. I would rather warn you against extreme measures, and any measures that are calculated to provoke a resort to violent resistance.

There may be a change of tables. Power is not stable. It is always stealing from the many to the few, and unless this government is entirely perverted from what it was instituted, the legitimate power will be against those who now exercise it. The only hope of retaining the power which is now exercised will be by keeping up that military force which now sustains it, and wielding it for the purpose of keeping the power that is now exercised in the government of the country, and of crushing out the last vestige of freedom in the land. I hope there will soon be an end to the exercise of this force within the limits of Maryland. I demand that the citizens of this State shall have the privilege of a free vote upon this constitution which we are now preparing, and which will in a short time be submitted to them for adoption or rejection. I trust there will be a free, unrestrained, untrammelled vote. If it be adopted by such a vote, it is the duty of all citizens to obey it and conduct themselves under it as good citizens. I should feel that to be my duty, and inculcate it as the duty of others. What I ask in advance is that we may have an opportunity to express our opinions either